

wherein the feeder is formed as a pair of feeding means positioning in contacting and/or separating each other,

the marker is adhered to the predetermined sheet by a predetermined pressure force as the predetermined sheet passes through the marker and sheet feeder, and
the pair of feeding means is positioned in contacting each other when the marker is adhered to sheet and in separating each other when the adhering of the marker is not needed.

*B4
C2
5b
5d
5e
5f
5g
5h
5i
5j*
Add new claim 14 as follows:

B5
14. (New) A sheet sorting apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the exchange of the position of the feeding means is operated synchronously with the operation of the cutter.

REMARKS

After entry of this Amendment, claims 1-10 and 12-14 are pending in the application and are presented for reconsideration.

Claims 1-11 were rejected under 35 USC 112, first paragraph, as containing subject matter which was not described in the specification. Claim 1 has been amended to delete the language identified by the Examiner. This deletion broadens the scope of claim 1. The rejection of claim 11 is mooted by its cancellation.

Claims 4 and 6 were rejected for indefiniteness. The amendments to claims 4 and 6 overcome this rejection by stating the means for changing the adhering position of claim 4 in positive terms (disclosed on pages 11 and 12 of the application, for example) and by correcting antecedent basis in claim 6. Neither of these amendments narrows the scope of the intended meaning of these claims.

Claims 1, 2, 4 and 11 were rejected as anticipated by Clark (U.S. Patent No. 4,966,644).

The amendments to claim 1 overcome this rejection, as Clark does not teach or suggest either the claimed feeding means or the adhering of a marker to each predetermined sheet of a group of sheets.

Claims 12 and 13 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) on Clark in view of Applicants' admitted prior art. As with claim 1, the amendments to claim 12 overcome this rejection, as Clark does not teach or suggest either the claimed feeding means or the adhering of a marker to each predetermined sheet of a group of sheets.

Claims 5 and 6 are also rejected under 35 USC 103(a) on Clark in view of two secondary references allegedly disclosing the differences between Clark and these claims. These rejections should be withdrawn because Clark falls short of disclosing what the Examiner considers it does, and the secondary references do not bridge the gaps between Clark and claims 5 and 6.

Claims 1-14 were also rejected under 35 USC 103(a) on various combinations of references including Busk (U.S. Patent No. 3,245,859). These rejections are respectfully traversed because Busk, like Clark, does not teach or suggest either the claimed feeding means or the adhering of a marker to each predetermined sheet of a group of sheets. The additional, secondary references cited by the Examiner do not overcome these deficiencies in Busk so that the invention would have been obvious to persons of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made.

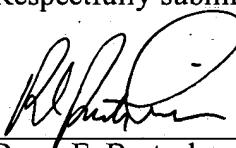
Applicants respectfully submit that all of the pending claims are in condition for allowance, which action is requested.

Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to the specification and claims by the current amendment. The attached pages are captioned "Version with markings to show changes made".

In the event that the transmittal letter is separated from this document and the Patent and Trademark Office determines that an extension and/or other relief is required, applicant petitions for any required relief including extensions of time and authorizes the Assistant Commissioner to charge the cost of such petitions and/or other fees due in connection with the filing of this document to Deposit Account No. 03-1952, referencing docket no. 163852016000. However, the Commissioner is not authorized to charge the cost of the issue fee to the Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

In the Claims:

1. (Twice Amended) A sheet sorting apparatus for adhering a marker to [a] each predetermined sheet of a group of sheets being output by an image processing apparatus, comprising:

a tape feeder for pulling out a tape having a pressure sensitive adhesive on one side edge;

a cutter for making the marker by cutting the tape at a preset length;

a guide for positioning the marker at a predetermined position on the predetermined sheet; and

a marker and sheet feeder for feeding the marker and the predetermined sheet in a partially overlapping position,

wherein the feeder is formed as a pair of feeding means positioned in contact with or separated from each other,

the marker is adhered to the predetermined sheet by a predetermined pressure force as the predetermined sheet passes through the marker and sheet feeder [without requiring sensors to activate the cutter], and

the pair of feeding means is positioned in contact with each other when the marker is adhered to sheet and separated from each other when the adhering of the marker is not needed.

4. (Twice Amended) The sheet sorting apparatus according to claim 1, [wherein] further comprising means for changing the adhering position of the marker on the sheet [may be changed].

6. (Twice Amended) The sheet sorting apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising a tape end detector on the path of the tape for signaling [the] an exchange of the tape.

12. (Twice Amended) An image processing apparatus comprising a sheet sorting apparatus for adhering a marker to [a] each predetermined sheet of a group of sheets discharged from the image processing apparatus, the sheet sorting apparatus comprising:

a tape feeder for pulling out a tape having a pressure sensitive adhesive on one side edge; a guide for positioning the marker at a predetermined position on the predetermined sheet; and

a marker and sheet feeder for feeding the marker and the predetermined sheet in a partially overlapping position,

wherein the feeder is formed as a pair of feeding means positioned in contact with or separated from each other,

the marker is adhered to the predetermined sheet by a predetermined pressure force as the predetermined sheet passes through the marker and sheet feeder, and

the pair of feeding means is positioned in contact with each other when the marker is adhered to sheet and separated from each other when the adhering of the marker is not needed.